

H. C. Harlow Paper 12.

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Tragedy of Jean MacRae

IN RESPONSE to a request by a reader for more information about the Jean MacRae tragedy, several correspondents have taken the trouble—and in some cases it was considerable—to satisfy this craving. The name of the unfortunate young woman, scalped by Indians, is variously spelt, but most frequently in the form we have used. The incident, commemorated by the curious tombstone in the Blue Church Cemetery three miles from Prescott, over the grave of David Jones, who described himself as the "lover in the Jean MacRae tragedy," occurred in the struggle of the American colonies for self-government. David Jones was a lieutenant in the King's service. Jean MacRae, to whom he was betrothed, was the daughter of one of the rebellious colonists. They had been engaged before the fighting began, but decided that as it would not last long they would defer their marriage until times were quieter. It is worth noting that at the time the inscription was carved on David Jones' tombstone, the word "lover" had not the rather unpleasant and sinister connotation it has acquired in modern times. It meant no more than that David Jones loved Jean MacRae and meant to marry her.

Divided by War

But as the war continued, partisan feelings became more bitter. The parents of Jean, or Janet, who had at one time been glad to see their daughter so happy in the prospect of marrying the man she loved, now turned against him. They opposed the match, and sought to persuade their daughter to give up her soldier sweetheart. But she resisted their importunities. David, who was made aware of the domestic turmoil, decided that he would not wait for the war to end. So he made arrangements to have Jean meet him half way between the outposts of the opposing armies. The spot chosen was the famed Ticonderoga, immortalized by Robert Louis Stevenson in one of the best narrative poems in our language. At that time Indians, some for the British and others for the colonists, were roving about the country, and Jones felt that his bride might be in some danger from them. So he arranged with some friendly braves that they should escort Jean to the appointed place where the marriage was to take place. But here some conflict in the story arises. Was Jean murdered by the Indians who had been engaged as her protector? Did she fall a victim in a fight between warriors of two different tribes? Was her death due to a complete misunderstanding by the Indian escorts of their duties?

A Horrible Crime

In any event, Jean was being conducted to Ticonderoga by a small band of Indians. A dispute arose among them. Some say that it was a contest to decide which of them would have the honor of conducting Jean to her lover. Some say that the Indians regarded her simply as an enemy whom they sought to deliver into the hands of a British officer. In any event, a brave raised his tomahawk in the midst of the dispute and decapitated her. Undoubtedly he felt that he had done

a service to the young lieutenant, for he proceeded to scalp his victim and this scalp in due time he presented to the young lieutenant. Jones was horrified to recognize in the sodden, golden tresses the remains of the girl he had loved. There was nothing that could be done about it. Whether the Indians were punished it not revealed in the record so far as we have seen it. Washington Irving mentions the incident in his *Life of George Washington* and says that David Jones was never known to smile again. A dramatic account of this tragedy is given in Bruce Lancaster's novel, *Guns of Burgoyne*. The incident was used as propaganda on both sides to illustrate the horrors of employing Indians as allies. But it is only fair to the Indians to state that their tortures were not native. They were imported by the Spaniards and later adopted by the red men.

Some Famous Remains

G. William Gorrell, whose name we overlooked the other day in thanking the correspondents who had come to our aid, tells us that the old cemetery where the bones of Lieutenant Jones lie is filled with the graves of historical personages, among others those of Barbara Heck, founder of Methodism in America and of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the great explorer of the Northwest. At the entrance of the cemetery is a large slab to mark the grave of a UE Loyalist captain of Irish descent, bearing this inscription:

"Stop mortal, and consider the uncertainty of life. In me behold a striking monument of immortality. I arose soon after the beams of returning day were gilding the bright chambers of the East, refreshed with sleep and vigorous to meet the avocation of the day. But, alas, before the sable curtains of night were dropped or the sun had finished his course, my life was ended."

Embalmed in Verse

Ann Montgomery points out that the tragedy of Jean MacRae is embalmed in a book of verse by George Washington Johnson, which contains perhaps the most famous song ever written in Canada. This was *When You and I Were Young, Maggie*, written by Johnson while a schoolmaster in Glanford, and inspired by Margaret Clark who became his wife. The MacRae poem, entitled *The Grave of Jane MacRae*, is far too long for inclusion here, but one verse runs:

"Maidens will weep when the tale is repeated,
Strangers will sigh when they gaze where she died;
Shudders will come when we think he was greeted
Not with a smile but the scalp of his bride."

The verses appeared originally in the *Canadian Illustrated News* of Hamilton on July 27, 1863. In his *The Charm of Ottawa*, Blodwen Davies says: "One of the first Loyalists who paddled his way from Lake Ontario into the district to discover its possibilities was a man who was not apt to find beauty or delight in any land. He was David Jones." Clarence Ostrom Alexandria says there are living relatives today at Maitland.

Comely Widow Freed in Murder of Husband

No Bats in Belfry But Cats in Ducts

Detroit, Sept. 22 (CP).—The Oak Park Christian Chapel hasn't got bats in its belfry—but it has cats in its ducts.

Two 3-week-old kittens, while keeping themselves snug and warm in the church heating duct, are slowly freezing out the congregation. Hymn singing at an evangelistic service last night was accompanied by the chattering of 200 sets of teeth while the kittens kept time by thumping their tails in their cosy retreat.

The Rev. James B. Shallow, pastor of the church, is fearful that the kittens might die from the heat if the furnace is turned on. The Rev. Mr. Shallow is just waiting and hoping.

Tobacco Growers Hope to Retain British Exports

Simcoe, Sept. 22.—As yet it is not definitely known by tobacco officials what effect the devaluation of the pound sterling will have on the export of Canadian flue-cured tobacco to Great Britain from the 1949 crop.

The British Government earlier in the year announced that it would release sufficient funds to purchase as much and possibly more tobacco than was purchased from the 1948 crop, and it is hoped that this early commitment will be kept. In 1948 the British Government released sufficient money to purchase \$6,000,000 worth of all types of Canadian tobacco, the greater portion being flue leaf. Altogether, 15 to 16 million pounds were exported from last year's crop.

It has been pointed out that the pound sterling is worth only \$2.80 in the United States, compared to \$3.08 in Canada, and this factor may appeal to the British Treasury due to the fact that it will be possible to have more Canadian than American tobacco laid down in Britain for the same money.

Awarded Medal For Saving Baby

St. Thomas, Sept. 22.—A medal from the National Safety Council of Ontario was presented to Mrs. F. W. Nicholls, Talbotville, of the Memorial Hospital nursing staff, for saving the life of 16-month-old

Sarnia, Sept. 22 (CP).—An attractive red-haired widow won her freedom today after she told of shooting her husband May 8 during a desperate struggle for a revolver.

An Ontario Supreme Court jury deliberated 50 minutes before acquitting 37-year-old Mrs. Jean Mary Ange of a charge of murder in the Mother's Day shooting of 39-year-old Thomas Ange, father of her three children.

Her voice rising at times to near hysteria, Mrs. Ange told of firing three bullets at her husband, a 200-pound hotel proprietor at near-by Port Lambton, after he had pointed the gun and threatened to kill her.

"I sprang at him," she told the jury. "I knocked it out of his hand and it fell on the floor. Then we both went for the gun."

"I was terrified—it must have been his eyes. I got the gun and I saw his hand come up with something shining in it. I backed away and something seemed to explode."

Mrs. Ange told of leaving her husband several times during their 14 years of married life because of cruelty. She had returned repeatedly because of the children, she added.

James Reddick of Chatham, a guest at Ange's hotel, said he had known the Anges for years. He said Ange was the worst type of alcoholic and that he continually tortured his wife with the worst form of mental cruelty.

On the day of the slaying, Reddick said, he had remonstrated with Ange and urged him to stop drinking. Ange told him he intended to keep on drinking. Fearing the man's ugly mood, Reddick stayed at the hotel, next to the couple's room. Later he heard the woman scream that she had shot her husband.

In his address to the jury, Mr. Justice F. H. Barlow said killing in self-defense was justifiable under the law. The jury could bring in one of two verdicts—guilty or not guilty of murder.

"If there is any reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty you must acquit her."

Accused of Arson In Bungalow Fire

Oshawa, Sept. 22 (Staff). — A charge of arson was laid today against Wallace McQuarrie of the third concession, Whitby Township.

Investigation by Constable Henry Price of a fire on Sept. 17 which destroyed McQuarrie's two-room frame bungalow, in which he lived with his wife and four children, resulted in the charge. Owner of the building was John May, Mrs. McQuarrie's father, who valued the cottage at \$1,000.

Left homeless by the blaze, the family has since been living with A. T. Suddard.

JANE McGrae

It is more than two centuries since the tragic death of Jane McGrae occurred. It happened in time of civil war and the story became basis for political overtones. Those who were involved in the event became members of the enemy and the truth of the story was forced to bow its head forever. And only some fifty years after the occurrence, the few who were in the area at the time, on being questioned, each had a different viewpoint. Thus the story has been told so many times both in verse and prose. That the real truth has been lost or at least so badly biased that it is hard to know just what did happen

as the most of the participants eventually returned to Canada, it would appear that the American tales of Jane's tragic death would have a certain degree of bias.

